NEWS — GOVERNMENT

Sen. Jason Lewis champions passage of the Massachusetts Plastics Reduction Act

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A plastic bottle on the edge of a river. COURTESY PHOTO/IVAN RADIC

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis:

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State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Senate to pass the Massachusetts Plastics Reduction Act, comprehensive legislation to reduce and eliminate single-use plastics that threaten our environment and human health. The bill passed with a bipartisan vote of 38-2.

Lewis, along with Rep. Michelle Ciccolo, co-founded and co-chairs the Zero Waste Caucus in the Legislature. This group of state lawmakers works together to reduce and eliminate waste through legislative action, education, state and local collaboration, and public outreach. Addressing the single-use plastics crisis is one of the Caucus's top priorities.

"The Massachusetts Plastics Reduction Act is the most far-reaching legislation ever passed in the state Legislature to tackle the scourge of single-use plastics," said Lewis, who serves as Co-chair of the Zero Waste Caucus. "I'm very grateful to the Plastic Free Mass coalition and the many constituents who have advocated for Massachusetts to prioritize this issue and become a national leader in reducing and eliminating single-use plastics from our communities."

"It's time Massachusetts made a bigger commitment to tackle the plastic pollution crisis in our state," said Nancy Downes, Oceana Field Campaigns Manager. "We applaud the Massachusetts Senate for passing S. 2830 which would protect our environment and coast by banning single-use plastic bags and reducing other single-use plastics across the state. Statewide polling by Oceana reveals that nearly 9 in 10 voters in Massachusetts are concerned about single-use plastic and support state and local policies to reduce it. Plastics are inundating our oceans, impacting the climate, and harming marine wildlife. We must stop the problem at its source by reducing the amount of single-use plastic produced and moving to reuse and refill systems. We call on the House to pass this much-needed bill."

The production, consumption, and disposal of single-use plastic
numerous harms to our environment and human health.

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Municipalities are also burdened with expensive waste disposal costs. Contrary to what many consumers believe, less than 10% of post-consumer plastic waste in the United States is actually recycled.

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The vast majority of this waste is burned in incinerators, buried in landfills, or ends up as litter in our streets and parks, eventually making its way into our oceans. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, much of which is plastic debris, already covers an area twice the size of Texas. Microplastic particles have been found everywhere on earth and throughout the food chain, including our bodies.

The Massachusetts Plastics Reduction Act takes comprehensive action to address this crisis, including:

• Implementing a statewide prohibition on carry-out plastic bags at retail stores. As of May 2023, 162 Massachusetts cities and towns, making up nearly 70% of the state's population, had already passed local ordinances to regulate single-use plastic bags.

• Allowing plastic utensils and straws to be given to consumers only upon request.

• Prohibiting single-use plastic bottle purchases by all state agencies, except for certain emergency situations.

• Requiring the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to establish a statewide bulk plastic recycling program for products such as car seats.

• Requiring non-flushable plastic wipes to be clearly labeled with Flush" warnings, along with a public outreach campaign.

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• Creating the Plastics Environmental Protection Fund to provide reusable bags to low-income communities and issue grants to small businesses to assist in the reduction of plastic use.

• Establishing a special commission to study and make recommendations for implementing extended producer responsibility (EPR) in the Commonwealth.

During debate on the Senate floor, Lewis was also successful in amending the bill to add a statewide prohibition on unrecyclable black plastic from being used for food service ware, and to require DEP to report back to the Legislature on the feasibility and benefits of phasing out use of polystyrene plastic products.

The Massachusetts Plastics Reduction Act now moves to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

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Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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